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ABSTRACT

A total of 1,341 male and female students enrolled at a private women's college, a two-year comprehensive college of moderate size, an agricultural-technical college, and a small two-year comprehensive college were surveyed in Spring 1974 to determine demographic and descriptive data, career choices, plans for labor force participation, and perceptions of counseling services. Almost twice as many women as men were sampled. Career-innovators were defined as women who had selected careers in which zero to 40 percent women are presently employed. Non-innovators were defined as women who planned to enter careers in which 70 to 100 percent of those employed are women. Approximately 20 percent of the women sampled were career-innovative. Compared to non-innovators, role innovative women had significantly higher college grades, had made their career choices more recently, aspired to higher educational degrees, were less apt to plan to marry before completing their education, planned to have fewer children, planned a wider range of careers, were less likely to cite closeness to home as a reason for choosing their college, and reported more problems with their colleges. Innovators and non-innovators reported similar appraisals of counseling services. Implications for counseling are noted, pertinent literature is reviewed, and tabulated data is presented. (Author/DC)

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CAREER INNOVATIVE AND NON-INNOVATIVE WOMEN IN THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING

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Within the past decade, growing emphasis on the utilization of women's talents and abilities and concern for women as women has resulted in directing attention to the career development and educational planning of women. Researchers have supported the development of separate theories of career choice for women (Psathas, 1968; Zytowski, 1969) and have investigated some of the special factors which affect women's selection of and commitment to a career. In particular, a great deal of research has been devoted to studies of the role-innovative woman, one who has chosen a career in an occupational field which is predominantly male, in contrast to women who express more traditional occupational goals.

A number of factors have been associated with role-innovation in the previous research. These studies stress the differences in personality characteristics, family background factors and career salience which differentiate the innovators from the women who select more traditional careers. For example, Retzler (1967) found that her vocational "pioneers" shared tendencies toward stronger computational and scientific abilities, better grades and more masculine characteristics. Tangri (1969, 1972) reported her sample of innovators to be more autonomous, individualistic and motivated by internally imposed demands to perform to capacity than traditionals. They had greater career commitment than women who planned careers in traditionally female occupations and had exposure to role models in their more educated working mothers. A supportive boyfriend was important for the role-innovator, even more important than faculty or female friendships, although the role innovator expected to postpone marriage and have fewer children than the traditional.

A study by Herman and Sedlacek (1972) yielded the finding that these non-traditional women are less likely to feel that their parents' input was integral in their career choice. They found that innovators were more likely to attach importance to a stable future in a career. A specific case of role-innovators, women medical students revealed such factors as a long standing interest in a career, motivation toward self-development and altruism to be pertinent to the career choice (Cartwright, 1972). In addition, Cook (1967) characterized these women as more likely to be single, less religiously conforming and more determined to use their academic competencies.

Attempts to account for the career goals of innovative and traditional women have also involved investigation of the type and influence of the counseling these women receive. Studies of bias in counseling (Thomas and Steward, 1971; Pietrofesa and Schlossberg, 1971) imply that disapproval and/or discouragement of non-traditional career goals by counselors may serve to keep women from considering wider career options. Jones (1973) in a study of the career aspirations of undergraduate women and minorities, cites lack of encouragement from significant others, lack of confidence in their natural ability to succeed in certain fields, stereotyped professions, financial strain and a general lack of knowledge about careers as inhibiting factors in women's failure to pursue male-dominated professional curricula and careers. When lack of encouragement for a career choice by a counselor was cited as a significant influence, the respondent was nearly always a woman.

While such research has helped to illuminate some of the influences on women's career choices, most of these studies have concentrated on the four-year college woman who aspires to professional level occupational goals. As a consequence, the findings of such research have largely been applicable to four-year institutions and their students and thus raises several key

questions for exploration in regard to women in other educational settings. In particular: 1) What are the characteristics of career innovators and non-innovators in the two-year college? 2) What are the implications of these characteristics for counseling women students in the two-year institutions?

An examination of the characteristics of role-innovative women in the two-year college is especially appropriate in view of the growing role of this institution in preparing many thousands of people for work or further study. With its open admissions policy and variety of career programs, including those in the newer technologies, the two-year college can be an important factor in facilitating access to wider occupational opportunities for all women. Although the innovators have attracted more attention by their break with stereotypic roles and career choices, the more conventional plans of non-innovators also merit investigation in order to discover ways of helping these women to make the best use of their educational experiences and broaden their career horizons.

The present study is part of a larger effort designed to contribute to the growing knowledge base on women in the two-year college, including demographic and descriptive information, career choices, plans for labor force participation and perceptions of counseling services. With reference to the career-innovative and non-innovative women, a more detailed examination of these variables was conducted to provide information whigh might be useful to the counseling practitioner in working with women students.

Survey Method

Data were obtained from a sample of students at four two-year colleges in New York State. The colleges were selected on the basis of the nature and scope of their programming (particularly for women), the diversity of their students, and the variety of their philosophies and administrative structures. The four colleges can be characterized roughly in the following manner: College 1, a multipurpose, multiprogram community college of moderate size (2400 students); College 2, a multipurpose college of small size (800 students); College 3, an agricultural and technical college; and College 4, a private women's college. A fifth two-year college was used for purposes of pretesting the survey instruments.

Based upon an extensive review of the literature pertaining to women's education, work history and career development, a structured questionnaire was developed and field tested. It was revised and administered to the students at the four two-year colleges during the Spring of 1974. The instrument was administered to a total of 1341 students in group settings, generally during the students' class time. Both male (n = 489) and female (n = 852) students were included in the total sample to permit comparisons and to avoid reactiveness and/or response bias from directing attention to women only.

The occupations of the women in the sample were coded according to the innovativeness of their career choice. Coding was based on the percentage of women employed in the occupation nationally, using U.S. Census figures for 1970. In this study, career innovators are defined as women who have selected careers in which 0 to 40 percent women are presently employed. Examples of these occupations include lawyer, physician, college professor,

journalist, accountant and sales manager. Non-innovators, or traditionals, are defined as women who plan to enter occupations in which 70 to 100 percent of those employed are women. Some traditional occupations are nurse, teacher, secretary, dietitian and librarian. These two categories yielded a sub-sample of 189 career innovators and 426 traditionals. The remainder of the women are either undecided upon their future career choice (n = 133) or career moderates (n = 103) who plan to enter occupations almost equally compsed of men and women (41 to 70 percent women). The present analysis is based upon the two extreme groups: the career innovators and the non-innovators, a total of 615 subjects.

Findings

As shown in Table 1, the career innovators compose approximately one-fifth of the women in the total sample. However, this proportion ranges from a low of 14.8 percent at the smaller of the two multi-purpose community colleges to 39.4 percent at the two-year agricultural and technical college. This may reflect, in part, the greater availability of non-traditional majors at the agricultural and technical institution. At all the institutions, women with traditional career choices are most numerous, totaling about one-half of the women in the sample. In the analysis a number of demographic characteristics and variables related to employment plans and perceptions of counseling are employed to compare the career innovators and non-innovators. These differences will be discussed below, followed by the implications of these findings for counseling practitioners.

TABLE 1. Innovativeness of Career Choice By College (n = 615)

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	TOTAL
Undecided	5.9%	22.5%	8.8%	24.5%	15.6%
Traditional	57.4	50.0	45.3	45.4	50.1
Moderate	17.3	12.7	6.5	10.0	12.1
Innovative	19.4	14.8	39.4	20.0	22.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Career Choice and Future Plans

The career innovators in the sample aspire to a wide range of occupations, primarily in professional, managerial and administrative career areas (See Table 2). In contrast, 96.6 percent of the non-innovators are concentrated in four occupations: registered nurse, teacher, secretary and medical technologist. The innovators also report significantly higher college grades (42.1% with B+ or higher) and are likely to have made their occupational choice more recently (86.4% since 11th grade) than the non-innovative women. These women tend to be liberal arts majors and plan on obtaining additional education beyond the Associate degree. Almost forty percent of these women plan to obtain at least a Master's degree, and another 29.2 percent plan on earning a Bachelor's degree. These differences are summarized in Table 3.

The innovators indicate that their chief reasons for selecting their chosen career are because it fits their special interests (38.0%) and because it permits creativity (11.2%). These reasons differ significantly from those specified by the more traditional women for whom working with or being helpful to people (40.8%) is of prime importance in making an occupational choice.

Innovators also differ in the selection of a future employer. In keeping with their numerous occupational choices in the fields of business and

and management, they tend to prefer business and industrial sites (58.1%) showing little interest in the educational institutions or health care facilities preferred by the non-innovators. Although innovators and traditionals both rank family as their chief source of satisfaction in life, innovators mention career most frequently when first, second and third choices are aggregated.

TABLE 2. Occupational Preferences of Career Innovators and Traditionals

Innovators (n = 185)	%	Traditionals (n = 409)	%
Accountant	11.4	Registered Nurse	36.7
Writer/Journalist	10.3	Teacher	25.3
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry	6.9	Secretary	17.8
Managers, Business, Manufacturing, Wholesale and Retail Trade	6.9	Medical Technician	6.8
Psychologist	6.5	Other	3.4
Commercial Artist/ Designer	5.9		
Sales/Merchandising	5.4		
Business Administration	4.3		
Biological/Physical Scientist	4.2		
Forestry, Natural Resource Mgmt.	3.8		
Computer/Data Processing	3.7		
Radio/TV Occupations	3.2		
Social Scientist	3.1		
Police/Detective Work	2.7		
Architect	2.7		
Lawyer	2.2		
Physician/Dentist	2.1		
Veterinarian	1.6		
Pharmacist	1.1		
Other	9.8		

TABLE 3. Variables Related to Career Choice and Future Plans

Variable	Innovators (n=426)	Traditionals (n=190)
Major**		
Liberal Arts	49.5%	21.8%
Agriculture & Technology	13.4	3.1
Health Areas	3.2	40.7
College Grades**		
B+ or Better	42.1	27.4
C to B	50.6	63.7
Main reason for Career Choice**		
Chance to work with people	7.0	19.3
Chance to be helpful	12.3	21.5
Fits special interests	38.0	25.6
Permits creativity	11.2	1.9
Preferred Employer**		
Own business	9.2	1.0
Small business	14.1	2.4
Medium/large business	30.8	7.7
Educational institution	8.6	24.2
Government service	15.1	4.5
Hospital or health facility	3.2	40.0
Major Source of Satisfaction in Life** (1st choice)		
Career	27.4	19.3
Family	47.9	59.3
Aggregate Source of Satisfaction in Life (ranked 1,2 or 3)		
Literature, Art, Music	33.5	23.5
Career	80.5	78.8
Family	72.5	84.7

** $p < .01$ (chi square)

It has been suggested that role-innovators in the four-year college are more career-oriented than their more traditional classmates, planning to work after marriage and children. In this sample, however, the plans of the two groups of women do not differ significantly (see Table 4). Most (94.4%) of the women expect to work after marriage and a majority (52.4%) expect to work after children are born. The innovators show some tendency to return to work sooner after the birth of a child: 17.7 percent indicate that they would return as soon as possible, while this response was given by only 9.7 percent

of the traditionals.

The differences in marriage and family plans are more obvious in the cases of time of marriage and desired family size. On these variables, the innovators are less likely to plan to marry before they complete their education and more likely to plan fewer children. Since these women generally anticipate getting more education than the traditional women, this is likely to mean that they are intending to wait longer to marry. They also are more likely to plan never to marry (8.6%). Half (52.2%) of them plan to have one or two children; 13.9 percent of them plan to have no children.

TABLE 4. Marriage and Family Plans

	Innovators %	Traditionals' %
Marriage Plans**		
Do not plan to marry	8.6	3.3
Marry before completing education	12.3	23.4
Marry after education complete	48.4	46.9
Marry after working 2 or more years	30.6	26.3
Desired family size**		
No children	13.9	5.1
1 - 2 children	52.2	45.6
3 or more children	33.8	49.3
Work After Children		
Plan to work after children	59.5	49.3
Return to Work as soon as possible after birth of child	17.7	9.7

** $p < .01$ (chi square)

Background Characteristics

With regard to family background and demographic characteristics, the innovative and non-innovative women are much alike (See Table 5). Occupations of the parents of both groups are similar. Fathers are professionals

(17.1%), administrators (32.1%), or semi-skilled workers (22.2%). The mothers are predominantly housewives (47.3%), sales and clerical workers (20.3%) or professionals (15.3%). While both the non-innovators and innovators have parents with similar levels of education, the innovators are somewhat more likely to have parents with more than a high school education although this difference is not statistically significant. Approximately 52 percent of the innovators have parents with some post-secondary education compared to 42 percent of the parents of the more traditional women.

Most of the women in both categories came directly to their college from high-school (61%), although they differ significantly in the ranking of reasons for selecting their particular school. Both groups of women cite the special programs offered by their colleges as the main reason for attending (innovators, 47.8%; non-innovators, 38.5%). However, 22.8 percent of the non-innovators specify closeness to home as a reason compared to only 8.4 percent of the innovators.

The majority of innovators and non-innovators (62%) do not work even part-time while in college and rely on parents (40%) as their principal means of support for school attendance.

TABLE 5. Background Characteristics (n = 615)

Variable	Innovators	Traditionals
Father's Occupation		
Professional	19.7	15.9
Administrative	32.4	32.0
Semi-skilled	21.8	22.3
Mother's Occupation		
Professional	17.0	14.6
Sales and Clerical	19.1	20.9
Housewife	47.3	47.3
Father's Education		
More than High School Graduate	54.1	42.2

TABLE 5 (Cont'd.)

Variable	Innovators	Traditionals
Mother's Education		
More than High School Graduate	50.1	43.3
Reason for Attending Chosen College**		
Closeness to home	8.4	22.8
Special programs offered	47.8	38.5
Post High School Activity		
Came directly to college	67.0	58.8
Employment		
Do not work	64.7	62.0
Work 11 or more hours per week	16.8	24.7
Major Source of Educational Financing		
Parents	40.1	40.0

** $p < .01$ (chi square)

Perceptions of Counseling

Beyond investigating the similarities and differences between career innovative and non-innovative women, we were interested in the interface between these women and the counseling services provided in their colleges. Specifically, we wanted to know how much contact the women have with college counselors; how helpful they think the counseling has been for career and educational decisions; what sorts of problems they have encountered and finally how satisfied they are with the services offered.

Approximately one-third of both types of students report they have never met with a college counselor, while the remaining two-thirds of both groups divided between meeting once a semester or less and twice a semester or more (Table 6).

Both the traditionals and innovators indicate similar opinions about the helpfulness of counseling services in general (See Table 7). However, over one-third of both groups indicate they have no opinion on whether counselors

can be helpful with career and educational decisions. This finding underscores the previously described information about frequency of contact with college counseling services. It is not surprising that since one-third of the women had never met with a counselor, they would also have no opinion on counselor helpfulness.

When asked about their specific problems, innovators vary from both the total sample and the non-innovators (Table 8). Over one-third (36.5%) indicate having had "some" or a "major" problem with their college major. Vocational choice was also an important problem for innovators with 10 percent indicating it was a major problem and 30 percent indicating it was "some" problem. Innovators are the principal subgroup from the total sample who have a problem with college rules and regulations with 19.8 percent noting "some" difficulty and 12.3 percent noting major problems. Innovators also have difficulty with college services. Our data do not specify which rules or services were a problem but we expect that they would vary college by college.

TABLE 6. Contact with College Counselors (n = 614)

	Innovators	Traditionals
Met twice a semester or more	38.6%	36.5%
Met once a semester or more	24.9	25.2
Never met with counselor	32.8	37.9
Other	3.7	.5

TABLE 7. Satisfaction with Counseling

Variable	Innovators %	Traditionals %	TOTAL n
Expresses satisfaction with counseling	67.8	69.4	569
Expresses dissatisfaction with counseling	32.3	30.6	569
Counseling very or somewhat helpful	51.6	53.5	593
No opinion about helpfulness	38.7	39.8	593

TABLE 8. Problems Encountered at College During the Past Year

Some or Major Problem	Innovators	Traditionals	TOTAL SAMPLE
Academic Major	36.5	28.4	35.4
Graduation, Academic Requirements**	24.6	36.8	33.7
Registration, course selection	53.4	50.9	54.5
Academic problems (e.g., grades, etc.)	49.5	52.3	50.4
Vocational choices**	40.1	26.5	36.0
Personal problems	56.7	53.0	53.7
College rules & regulations**	32.1	19.0	22.7
College services & opportunities	31.8	22.7	27.6

** $p < .01$ (chi square)

Implications of the Study

Although true role innovativeness is expressed by only one-fifth of the total sample, variations from the traditional feminine lifestyle of schooling, marriage then housekeeping are strongly present in the plans of all the women. Work will play an increasingly important part in these two-year college women's

lives, not solely because of any national trends in job opportunities for women, although that is important, but because the women themselves are determining that work apart from family is important to them; that it is, in effect, an equally meaningful way to express their concerns for helping others. In this regard, counselors might give greater attention to life planning and/or life assessment needs of women. This is particularly important for those women who plan dual roles in a career and family or who may anticipate returning to work at a later stage in life.

Whether their plans are innovative or traditional, over 40 percent of these women who plan to work continuously throughout the next fifteen year period are also planning to marry and have an average of two or more children. Thus, although the distinctions in what constitutes appropriate "masculine" and feminine" family roles may continue to diminish and the distribution of household and family responsibilities may become more egalitarian, women's attitudes and expectations about the place of marriage and family in their future plans merit consideration by counselors. For example, their thinking or lack of thinking about the compatibility and mutuality of career and family responsibilities may benefit greatly from skilled input by counselors and other forms of assistance. One suspects that in the face of the inevitable decisions and obstacles which occur in trying to manage career and family simultaneously, that without encouragement, support and a modicum of planning a woman's career aspirations will yield to family commitments. The people responsible for the counseling and career development services in the two-year colleges need to be aware of these inconsistencies and naiveties not so as to discourage women from

attempting the career-family mode but to better prepare them to deal with its exigencies.

While such obstacles as the above affect all women and their plans, some other suggestions for counselors emerge from considering each of the groups separately. For instance, the innovative women in the study reported having more problems within their colleges than any other subgroup in the total sample. Counselors need to discover the regulations, curriculum requirements, financial and personal constraints that hinder these students, not simply to abolish all difficulties, which would be unrealistic, but certainly to discover what the problems are and the possible ways they might be resolved. It also should be understood that the problems this group of individuals are experiencing can have a far broader impact; their difficulties may be producing a "chilling" effect on the desires of other women to choose innovative careers.

For the traditionals, there are also special difficulties. In the wake of declining birth rates and recent economic changes, the employment outlook for many of the traditional "women's" occupations is discouraging. Although women should be free to select an occupation in keeping with interests and abilities, many of these young women may find it difficult to locate employment in direct line with their training. Counselors can assist women to see that many of the skills acquired in the process of preparing for one career goal are transferable to other areas as well, such as the transferability of certain secretarial and business training with banking or real estate. Counselors can be effective also in providing women with accurate and up-to-date occupational information in order that these students may find appropriate and satisfying employment opportunities.

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